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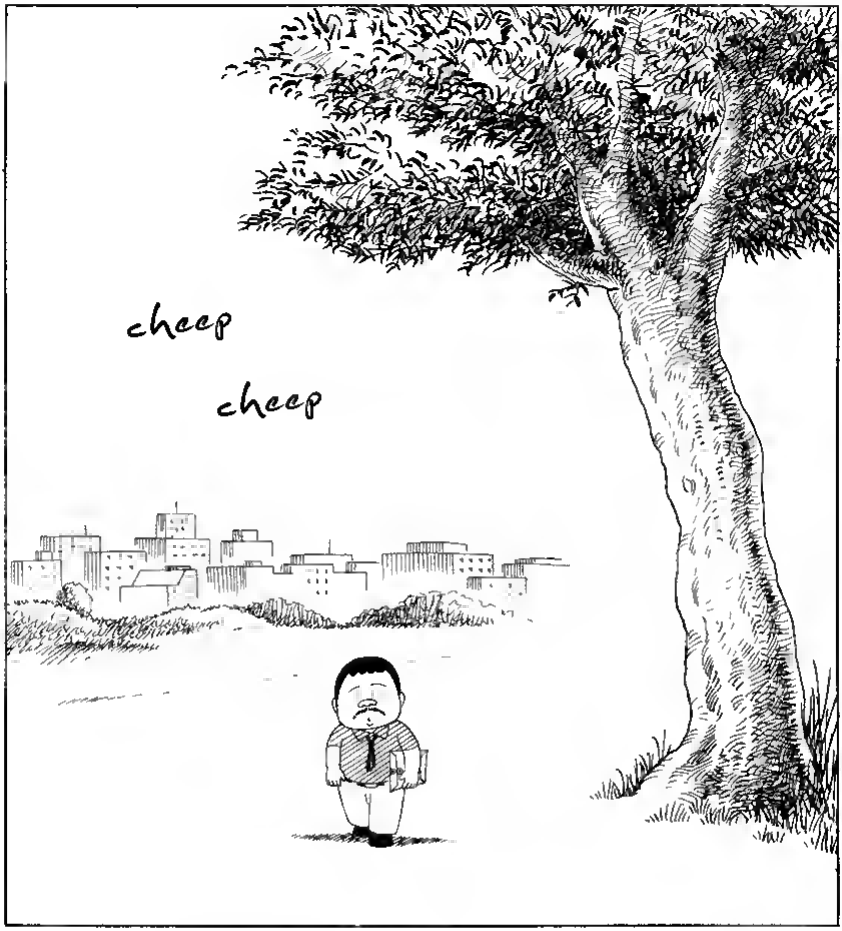
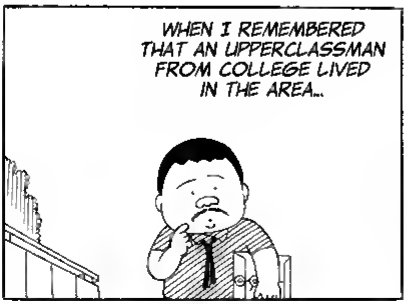
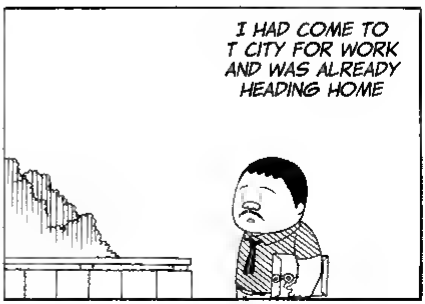
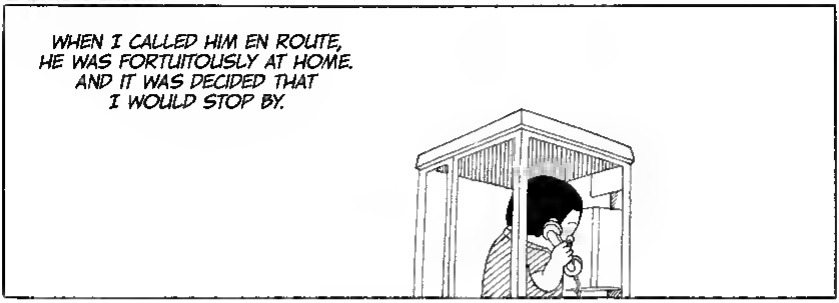
PART 7

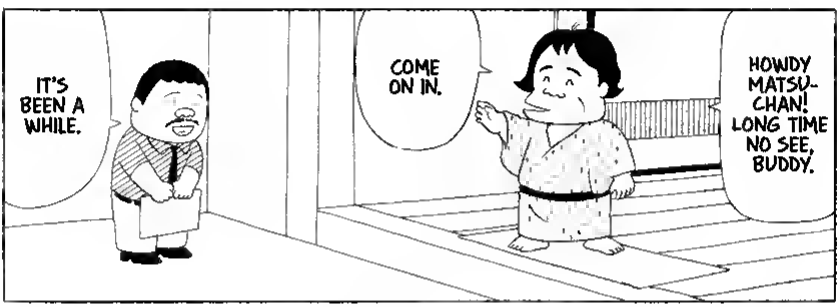
Delicious Shochu


cheep
cheep


WHEN I REMEMBERED THAT AN UPPERCLASSMAN FROM COLLEGE LIVED IN THE AREA...


I HAD COME TO T CITY FOR WORK AND WAS ALREADY HEADING HOME


WHEN I CALLED HIM EN ROUTE, HE WAS FORTUITOUSLY AT HOME. AND IT WAS DECIDED THAT I WOULD STOP BY.


IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
COME ON IN.
HOWDY MATSU-CHAN! LONG TIME NO SEE, BUDDY.

WHAT AN INCREDIBLE NUMBER OF BOTTLES.
A GLASS? WOW!
I JUST FINISHED WORK AND WAS ABOUT TO POUR MYSELF A GLASS.

THIS IS ALL SHOCHU?
I'VE BEEN ASKED TO WRITE AN ESSAY ON THE LATEST TRENDS IN SHOCHU. SO I'M HAVING MYSELF A LITTLE TASTING.
ACTUALLY, THIS IS ALL FOR WORK, TOO.
SO EVEN IF YOU LET ME DRINK SOMETHING, IT MAY JUST BE GOING TO WASTE.
THE OWNER OF LEMON HEART SAYS I DON'T HAVE ANY TASTE.
BUT ONCE YOU'VE HAD A BIT OF SHOCHU, IT'S HARD TO GIVE UP.
I NORMALLY PREFER TO JUST DRINK SAKE,
THEN THIS ONE HERE...
WHICH WOULD YOU LIKE?
NO WORRIES, MY FRIEND. THIS STUFF IS ALL RATHER CHEAP.

KICCHOMU
NIKAIDO BARLEY
SHOCHU

IT'S A BESTSELLER AND HARD TO GET A HAND ON EVEN AT A LIQUOR STORE, RIGHT?
DOES THIS SAY KICCHOMU?
IT'S A BARLEY SHOCHU!
HEY! THAT RIGHT THERE IS WHAT SET OFF THE WHITE SPIRITS BOOM!
I'M SOR-RY.
AS I TOLD YOU BEFORE, I CAN'T REALLY TASTE MUCH OF ANYTHING.
AND?
SHHP
THEN THAT MEANS YOU CAN'T HAVE NO TASTE, MATSU-CHAN!
WOW!
I CAN'T TELL YOU EVEN THAT MUCH.
YOU SHOULD AT LEAST KNOW WHETHER IT'S GOOD OR BAD, RIGHT?
THAT'S ITS SELLING POINT!
THIS WAS DESIGNED NOT TO HAVE THE USUAL SHOCHU AFTERTASTE. SO IT SHOULD JUST TASTE LIKE WATER AND BE REALLY EASY TO DRINK.
HUH?

LIKE THIS ONE HERE.
LET'S PROCEED NOW TO A HONKAKU SHOCHU, SHALL WE?

I SEE...
EVEN COLLEGE COEDS WILL DRINK KICCHOMU WITHOUT A FUSS.

DESPITE THE NAME, SESAME ISN'T ITS ONLY INGREDIENT.

YOU CAN MAKE SHOCHU OUT OF SESAME?
SES-AME...

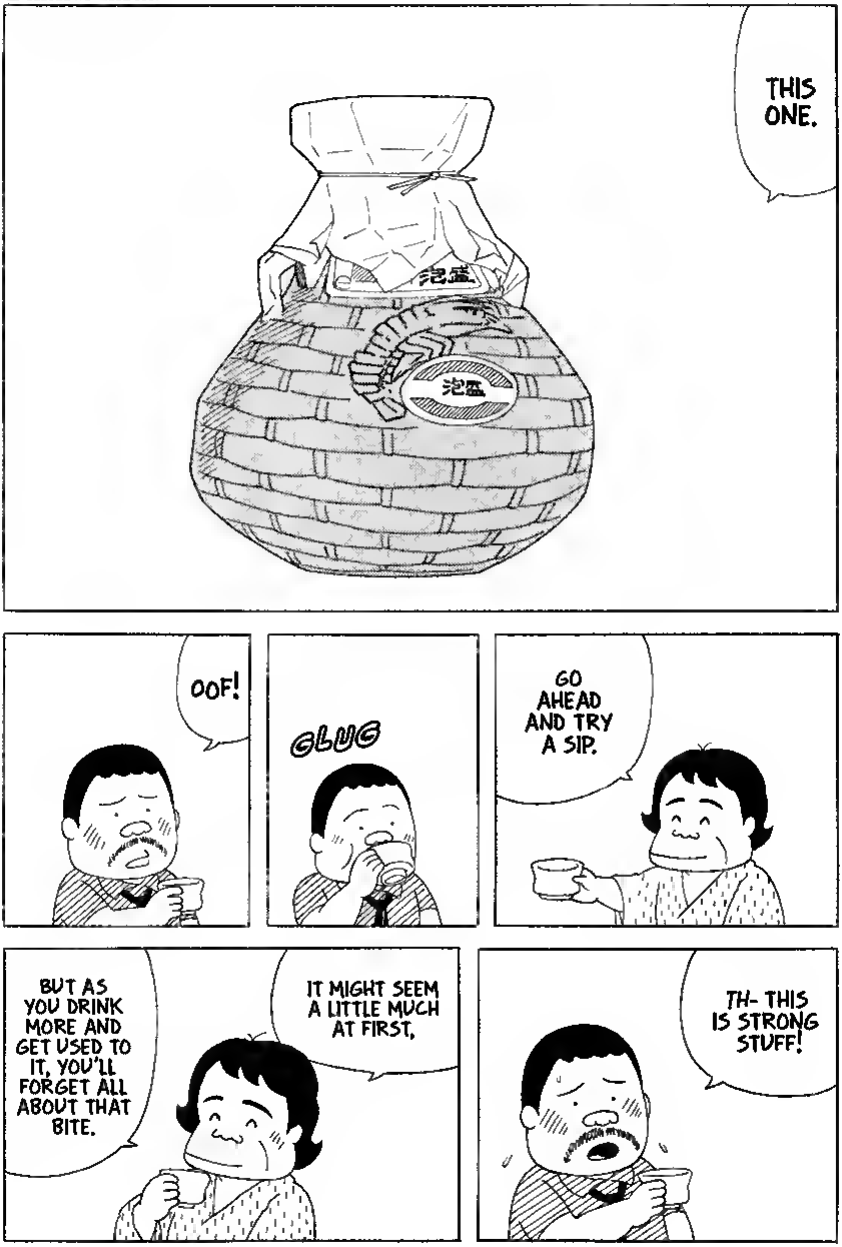
I SUPPOSE THERE IS A LITTLE SESAME FLAVOR.
HMMM... NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT,
麦笛
AND YOU'RE LEFT WITH A SUBTLE HINT OF SESAME AT THE END.
SESAME IS ADDED TO THE USUAL BARLEY DURING FERMENTATION.
BUT EVEN IF YOU TELL ME THAT...
DEEPER, HUH?
SO YOU'LL GET A RICHER, DEEPER TASTE THAN USUAL.
AND IT'S BEEN MATURED FOR FIVE YEARS.
LET'S SEE...
WHAT NEXT?
NOW THEN,
ALL THESE BOTTLES.
ANYWAY, LET ME TAKE A MOMENT TO ENJOY THE SIGHT OF
WITH THIS MANY OPTIONS, IT'S REALLY HARD TO CHOOSE.

くり焼酎
麦笛
名壱
壱岐の華
PHILIA
白鶴
純
20
琥珀焼酎
25
WHITE LIQUOR
GODO
Waricka
兼門
鬼倒
黄金
中洲
吉四六

THIS ONE LOOKS LIKE IT'D REALLY SUIT ME.
純
20
ONE AT A TIME.
MAN, IT REALLY IS FUN TO LOOK AT THEM ALL
純
20
NOTE: THE NAME OF THE SHOCHU, JUN, MEANS "SIMPLE"
ARE THEY RANKS?
OH YEAH. THERE ARE OTSU AND KOU TYPES OF SHOCHU, HUH?
A KOU?
純
20
THAT THERE'S A KOU.
NOW, OUR KOUS INCLUDE...
純
BUT ONE ISN'T HIGHER, LOWER, BETTER, OR WORSE THAN THE OTHER.
ACCORDING TO LAW, SHOCHU IS DIVIDED INTO OTSUS AND KOUS.
25
WHITE LIQUOR
GOOD
Walicka
WALICKA
MILD
MILD SHIRO-RAKU
JUN
純
20
JUN

AND THAT'S A KOU?
BUT THEY'RE NORMALLY MADE FROM GRAINS, SWEET POTATOES, BROWN SUGAR, AND MOLASSES TO MAKE AN ODORLESS, COLORLESS, HIGH-ALCOHOL LIQUID THAT IS THEN SPLIT WITH WATER TO WEAKEN IT.
SUNTORY DOES MAKE CORN SHOCHUS AND SO ON,
AND THE COLUMN STILL TECHNOLOGY WAS IMPORTED TO HELP SPUR PRODUCTION.
DURING THE MEIJI ERA, SHOCHU WAS CONSIDERED A MILITARY NECESSITY.
BUT RATHER WHITE LIQUOR. ACTUALLY, THIS IS THE KIND OF SHOCHU YOU MIGHT USE TO MAKE UMESHU AT HOME.
WE GENERALLY DON'T CALL THEM KOUS NOW
SO SHOCHU WAS ENTANGLED IN WAR? I HAD NO IDEA.
AND A NEW, MORE DILUTED FORM WAS INTRODUCED TO THE MARKET CALLED "NEW STYLE SHOCHU." THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE KOUS WE KNOW TODAY.
AFTER THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR ENDED, THERE WAS A GLUT OF LEFTOVER ALCOHOL,
THEIR INGREDIENTS INCLUDE RICE, SWEEET POTATOES, SAKE LEES, BUCK-WHEAT, AND SO FORTH. THERE ARE ACTUALLY QUITE A FEW DIFFER-ENT KINDS.
WE DON'T CALL THEM OTSUS NOWA-DAYS ANYMORE BUT RATHER HONKAKU SHOCHU.
THEN WHAT ABOUT OTSUS?

WHAT'S THIS ONE MADE OF?
WHILE DRINKING A GLASS OF SHOCHU CAN BE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PLEASURE.
THUS, RUMINATING ON ITS INGREDIENTS
AND IT'S A RICE SHOCHU?
THIS ONE WAS MADE WITH WATER FROM KUMAMOTO'S KUMA RIVER AND WITHOUT ANY ADDED SUGAR. IT BOASTS MANY FANS INDEED.
RICE.
六調子
AWAMORI?
OKINAWA'S "AWAMORI."
AMONG THE MANY HONKAKU SHOCHU HOWEVER, THERE'S ONE IN PARTICULAR WHOSE STORY DESERVES SINGULAR TELLING.
WHICH ONE'S THAT?
AWAMORI... AWAMORI... HUH?

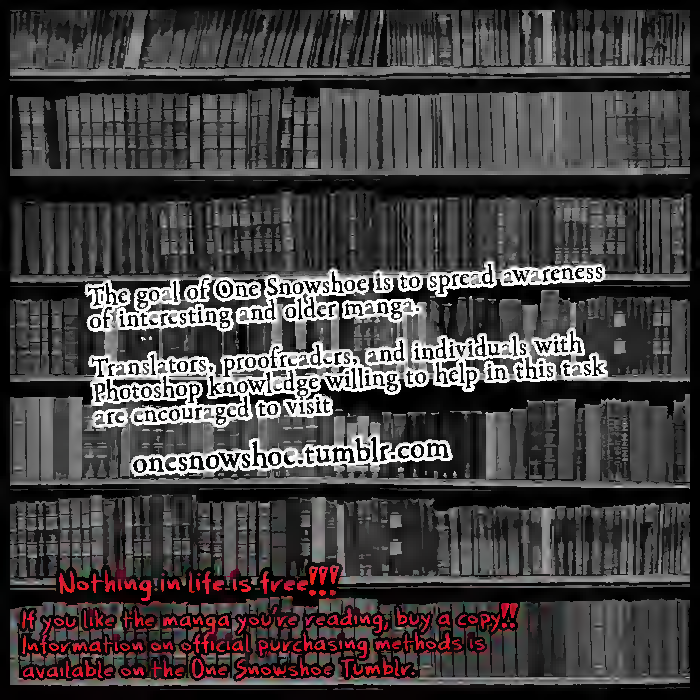

THIS ONE.
泡盛
泡盛
OOF!
GLUG
GO AHEAD AND TRY A SIP.
BUT AS YOU DRINK MORE AND GET USED TO IT, YOU'LL FORGET ALL ABOUT THAT BITE.
IT MIGHT SEEM A LITTLE MUCH AT FIRST,
TH- THIS IS STRONG STUFF!

FOR THE ELITE? THIS?!
THIS USED TO BE A DRINK FOR THE ELITE!
YOU MIGHT BE SAYING THAT NOW, BUT I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW
THIS IS A LITTLE TOO MUCH FOR ME...
ONLY THE ELITES FOR WHOM IT WAS INTENDED WERE ABLE TO DRINK THIS PRECIOUS ALCOHOL.
AND THOUGH REPRESENTATIVES FROM MANY SOUTHERN COUNTRIES ARRIVED TO PROCURE IT,
THAT WAS IN FACT TITHED BY THE SHIMAZU CLAN TO THE TOKUGAWA SHOGUNATE.
AWAMORI WAS A HIGH-GRADE ALCOHOL
THEN I GUESS I'LL HAVE ANOTHER GLASS!
IT USED TO BE THAT PRECIOUS, HUH?
NOW IT FEELS LIKE I'M A SHOGUN!
SWIG
HA HA HA

WOOO!
AND THAT'S HOW IT GOT ITS NAME, BUT...
NOW, THE FERMENTING MASH OF AWAMORI
PRODUCES LOTS OF BUBBLES ALONG ITS SURFACE, AND THE WHOLE TOP WILL RISE UP.
HEY. YOU ALL RIGHT, MAN?
FLUTTER

VOMPF
THEN WHADDYA WANT?!
NO MATTER WHAT YOU GIVE ME, I WON'T DRINK IT.
SENPAI, I'VE HAD ENOUGH SHOCHU.
IS WATER!
WHAT I WANT MOST RIGHT NOW...

♡PART 7 END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